

The Washington Post, 1 May 2008

Clinton Gas-Tax Proposal Criticized

A growing chorus -- including a top congressional Democrat -- labeled Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's proposal for suspending the federal gasoline tax ineffective and shortsighted yesterday, even as she continued to paint Sen. Barack Obama as insensitive to drivers' woes for not endorsing the plan. The Democrats' clash on the issue has emerged as a flash point in the week before the presidential primaries in Indiana and North Carolina and is emblematic of the broader contrast that the candidates have presented: Clinton says she would make immediate bread-and-butter fixes for struggling Americans, while Obama portrays himself as a truth-teller who would bring a new kind of politics to Washington and produce more lasting change.

The New York Times, 1 May 2008

After Break With Ex-Pastor, Obama Tries to Move On

Senator Barack Obama sought on Wednesday to set aside the controversy over his former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright Jr., and steer the conversation in the Democratic presidential campaign back to the economy. One day after forcefully breaking with Mr. Wright, Mr. Obama returned to Indiana for a series of events intended to highlight his proposals for tax cuts for the middle class. With six days to go before crucial primaries in Indiana and North Carolina, Mr. Obama is trying to retake control of his message, which had been overshadowed by incendiary remarks made by Mr. Wright and by Mr. Obama's response.

The New York Times, 2 May 2008

Loss and Furor Take Toll on Obama, Poll Finds

Senator Barack Obama's aura of inevitability in the battle for the Democratic presidential nomination has diminished after his loss in the Pennsylvania primary and amid the furor over his former pastor, according to the latest New York Times/CBS News Poll. Mr. Obama, of Illinois, still holds an edge over Mrs. Clinton, of New York, on several key measures; for example, 46 percent of the Democratic primary voters said he remained their choice for the nomination, while 38 percent preferred Mrs. Clinton, down from 43 percent last month, and she has lost support among men in recent weeks. Mr. Obama also has an advantage over Mrs. Clinton in ratings on honesty and integrity and in being less beholden to special interest groups.

The Washington Post, 4 May 2008

Probe of USS Cole Bombing Unravels

Almost eight years after al-Qaeda nearly sank the USS Cole with an explosives-stuffed motorboat, killing 17 sailors, all the defendants convicted in the attack have escaped from prison or been freed by Yemeni officials. Two suspects, described as the key organizers, were captured outside Yemen and are being held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, beyond the jurisdiction of U.S. courts. Many details of their alleged involvement remain classified. It is unclear when -- or if -- they will be tried by the military. Some officials acknowledged that pursuing the Cole investigation became less of a political priority with the passage of time. A new administration took power three months after the bombing. Then came Sept.

The New York Times, 4 May 2008

Clinton May Be Hopeful, but Obama Rolls On

After weeks in which her candidacy was seen by many party leaders as a long shot at best, Mrs. Clinton's advisers argued strenuously on Thursday that the answer was most assuredly yes, that the outlook was turning in her favor in a way that gave her a real chance. Mr. Obama continues to pick up the support of superdelegates 'elected Democrats and party leaders 'at a quicker pace than Mrs. Clinton. Although Mrs. Clinton has cut into Mr. Obama's popular vote lead, it would be difficult for her to overtake him without counting the disputed results in Florida and perhaps Michigan.

The Washington Post, 5 May 2008

Dueling Appeals On Taxes From Obama, Clinton

Two days before critical primaries in Indiana and North Carolina, Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) scolded both Sen. Barack Obama (D) and "elite opinion" Sunday for opposing her proposals to fix the ailing economy, while the senator from Illinois accused her of political pandering. Obama appeared to acknowledge that Clinton's populist economic message is finding a receptive audience in Indiana when he called for a second round of government tax rebates. "Let me tell you something, people are really hurting," Obama said during his own appearance in Fort Wayne. "I am here to tell you, you're not on your own. We're in this together."

The New York Times, 5 May 2008

For Immigrants Who Died in U.S. Custody, Few Details Provided

Word spread quickly inside the windowless walls of the Elizabeth Detention Center, an immigration jail in New Jersey: A detainee had fallen, injured his head and become incoherent. Guards had put him in solitary confinement, and late that night, an ambulance had taken him away more dead than alive. The list, compiled by Immigration and Customs Enforcement after Congress demanded the information, and obtained by The New York Times under the Freedom of Information Act, is the fullest accounting to date of deaths in immigration detention, a patchwork of federal centers, county jails and privately run prisons that has become the nation's fastest-growing form of incarceration.

The New York Times, 6 May 2008

Democrats Battle Over Gas Tax and Iran

Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton bickered over the airwaves on gasoline taxes, foreign policy and the state of the race for the Democratic nomination Monday morning as they began their final furious day of campaigning before the North Carolina and Indiana primaries set for Tuesday. Mr. Obama has called the proposal, which followed a similar plan by Senator John McCain of Arizona, the presumed Republican presidential nominee, a gimmick designed to pander to lower-income voters. Mr. Obama was also critical of Mrs. Clinton's comment two weeks ago that as president she would 'otally obliterate' Iran if it were to attack Israel with nuclear weapons. He compared such language to the posturing of President Bush. The Iranian president lodged a formal protest to the United Nations about her comment.

The New York Times, 7 May 2008

Obama Wins North Carolina Decisively; Clinton Takes Indiana by Slim Margin

Senator Barack Obama won a commanding victory in the North Carolina primary on Tuesday and lost narrowly to Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton in Indiana, an outcome that injected a boost of momentum to Mr. Obama's candidacy as the Democratic nominating contest entered its final month. In winning North Carolina by 14 percentage points, Mr. Obama ' whose campaign had been embattled by controversy over the incendiary remarks of his former pastor ' recorded his first primary victory in nearly two months. His campaign was preparing to open a new front in his battle with Mrs. Clinton, intensifying the argument to uncommitted Democratic superdelegates that he weathered a storm and that the time was dawning for the party to concentrate on the general election.

The New York Times, 7 May 2008

Clinton Vows to Fight On Despite Split Primary Result

With her hopes for fresh political momentum deflated by Tuesday night's primary results and with signs of mounting financial problems, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton nonetheless vowed on Wednesday to fight on. She began her campaign for the May 13 primary in West Virginia while her advisers huddled privately to assess her options. Highlighting the difficulties Mrs. Clinton has had in financing her high-spending battle against Senator Barack Obama for the Democratic presidential nomination, officials from her campaign disclosed on Wednesday that she had lent her campaign more than \$6 million over the last month. Advisers said that Mrs. Clinton had no intention of dropping out of the race now. But even some of her most optimistic supporters were measured in their comments about how well-positioned she was to continue running.

The Washington Post, 9 May 2008

McCain Pushed Land Swap That Benefits Backer

Sen. John McCain championed legislation that will let an Arizona rancher trade remote grassland and ponderosa pine forest here for acres of valuable federally owned property that is ready for development, a land swap that now stands to directly benefit one of his top presidential campaign fundraisers. Initially reluctant to support the swap, the Arizona Republican became a key figure in pushing the deal through Congress after the rancher and his partners hired lobbyists that included McCain's 1992 Senate campaign manager, two of his former Senate staff members, and an Arizona insider who was a major McCain donor and is now bundling campaign checks. McCain also has been critical of government's "revolving door," which allows former government officials to position themselves as influential lobbyists.

The New York Times, 10 May 2008

Obama Pulls Ahead of Clinton in Superdelegates

Senator Barack Obama surged ahead of his rival, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, in the count of superdelegates on Friday, the first time since the outset of the race that Mrs. Clinton has lost the lead in one of her few remaining trump cards. Mr. Obama racked up seven endorsements in the last 24 hours from superdelegates, the Democratic Party insiders who are granted autonomy to support whomever they wish at the convention in

August. One, a New Jersey congressman, switched his allegiance away from Mrs. Clinton, allowing the Illinois senator to pull ahead of his opponent, according to the latest New York Times count. Mr. Obama's gains came as other senior members of his party appeared to be closing ranks around him.

The New York Times, 12 May 2008

Already, Obama and McCain Map Fall Strategies

Senators John McCain and Barack Obama are already drawing up strategies for taking each other on in the general election, focusing on the same groups ' including independent voters and Latinos ' and about a dozen states where they think the contest is likely to be decided this fall, campaign aides said. Mr. McCain, of Arizona, will spend the next week delivering a series of speeches on global warming, evidence of his intention to battle Mr. Obama for independent voters, a group the two men have laid claim to. Those voters tend to recoil from hard-edged partisan politics, and presumably would be receptive to the kind of bipartisan forum that Mr. McCain and Mr. Obama seemed open to on Saturday.

The New York Times, 12 May 2008

Clinton Team Acknowledges \$20 Million Debt

With her campaign falling ever deeper into debt, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton spent a rainy Mother's Day seeking votes ahead of Tuesday's primary here, turning a deaf ear to calls for her to leave a Democratic presidential contest she has little hope of winning. Clinton aides continued to insist that she will remain in the race even while confirming that she is \$20 million in debt. "The voters are going to decide this," senior adviser Howard Wolfson said on "Fox News Sunday," acknowledging the \$20 million figure. Obama is likely to win in Oregon, also a May 20 primary state. Clinton has campaigned hard in West Virginia, and her aides said Sunday that she will hold a victory celebration at the Charleston Civic Center on Tuesday night.

The New York Times, 14 May 2008

Clinton Beats Obama in West Virginia

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (N.Y.) claimed an overwhelming victory over Sen. Barack Obama (Ill.) in West Virginia's presidential primary today, a win that increased the likelihood of her continued candidacy but did little to alter her position as a decided underdog in the race for the Democratic nomination. For Clinton, the win - while expected - will further help her to justify remaining in the race despite her drubbing by Obama last week in North Carolina and her very narrow win in Indiana. West Virginia is one of just six contests left in the Democratic nomination fight.

The New York Times, 15 May 2008

Republican Election Losses Stir Fall Fears

The Republican defeat in a special Congressional contest in Mississippi sent waves of apprehension across an already troubled party Wednesday, with some senior Republicans urging Congressional candidates to distance themselves from President Bush to head off what could be heavy losses in the fall. Republicans had sought to link Mr. Childers to Mr. Obama in an advertising campaign there. Republican leaders said they were looking to

Senator John McCain of Arizona, the likely Republican nominee, as a model whose independent reputation appears to allow him to rise above party in a year when the Republican label seems tarnished. Mr. McCain acknowledged the difficulties he and other Republicans face in this political environment.

The Washington Post, 16 May 2008

McCain Sees U.S. Troops Leaving Iraq by 2013

Sen. John McCain on Thursday offered for the first time what he hopes will be an end date for the war in Iraq, part of a vision he presented in which his policies lead to peace and prosperity at home and abroad by 2013, the end of what would be his first term as president. McCain's goal of a large-scale troop withdrawal within four years was the highlight of a wide-ranging speech that sketched a world in which Democrats would join with him to approve his domestic and foreign policy agendas. McCain's advisers disputed any likeness between his goals for Iraq and the positions of the Democratic presidential candidates, Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The New York Times, 17 May 2008

About That Foreign Policy "Dust Up" . . .

Senator Barack Obama responded sharply Friday to recent criticism of his foreign policy by President Bush and Senator John McCain, saying that the Republican leaders were guilty of 'dishonest, divisive attacks' and had engaged in 'hypocrisy, fear-peddling, fear-mongering' in an effort to continue what Mr. Obama called 'the failed policies of the past seven years.' "George Bush and John McCain have a lot to answer for," Mr. Obama said at a town hall meeting in a barn here, listing the war in Iraq and stalled diplomacy in other parts of the Middle East. He added "If George Bush and John McCain want to have a debate about protecting the United States of America, that is a debate I am happy to have any time, any place."

The New York Times, 17 May 2008

U.S. Planning Big New Prison in Afghanistan

The Pentagon is moving forward with plans to build a new, 40-acre detention complex on the main American military base in Afghanistan, officials said, in a stark acknowledgment that the United States is likely to continue to hold prisoners overseas for years to come. The proposal for a new American prison at Bagram underscores the daunting scope and persistence of the United States military's detention problem, at a time when Bush administration officials continue to say they want to close down the facility at Guant'namo Bay.

The New York Times, 17 May 2008

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facility at Guant'namo Bay.

The New York Times, 19 May 2008

McCain to Rely on Party Money Against Obama

Pivoting toward the general election, Senator Barack Obama is turning again to his history-making fund-raising machine, which helped to anoint him as a contender against Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton and then became a potent weapon in their battle for the Democratic nomination. To confront the Obama juggernaut, Senator John McCain, whose fund-raising has badly trailed that of his Democratic counterparts, is leaning on the Republican National Committee. Mr. McCain's efforts to raise money suffered a blow this weekend when a key fund-raiser, Tom Loeffler, resigned because of a new campaign policy on conflicts of interest. Mr. McCain is likely to depend upon the party, which finished April with an impressive \$40 million in the bank and has significantly higher contribution limits, to an unprecedented degree to power his campaign, Republican officials said.

The New York Times, 20 May 2008

Obama Is Expected to Hit a Milestone in Today's Votes

Senator Barack Obama is poised to reach a milestone in the presidential race on Tuesday by capturing a majority of pledged delegates, but he said he would not declare victory against Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton or suggest the Democratic primary should end until the final three contests are finished on June 3. For Mr. Obama, the situation is delicate. While eager to proceed to a general election match with Senator John McCain of Arizona, the likely Republican nominee, Mr. Obama is also trying to bring the contest to a close in a way that allows him to win over Mrs. Clinton's supporters and unify the party.

The New York Times, 21 May 2008

Obama Says Nomination 'Within Reach'

Senator Barack Obama took a big step toward becoming the Democratic presidential nominee on Tuesday, amassing enough additional delegates to claim an all but insurmountable advantage in his race against Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. Mr. Obama won the Oregon primary on Tuesday night, although he lost Kentucky to Mrs. Clinton. Under the rules used by Democrats, Mr. Obama's showing in Kentucky and his victory in Oregon appear to be enough to allow him to secure a majority of the delegates up for grabs in primaries and caucuses. He has portrayed that threshold as a yardstick for judging the will of Democratic voters.

The New York Times, 21 May 2008

Senator Kennedy Has Malignant Brain Tumor

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, the longtime Massachusetts Democrat and patriarch of the Kennedy family, has a malignant brain tumor, his doctors said on Tuesday. Doctors here at Massachusetts General Hospital, who were investigating the cause of a seizure that Mr. Kennedy, 76, suffered at his Cape Cod compound on Saturday, said preliminary results from a biopsy of the brain had revealed that he has a malignant glioma in the left parietal lobe, the upper left part of his brain. "Senator Kennedy enjoys great respect and

admiration on this side of the aisle," said Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the Republican leader

The Washington Post, 21 May 2008

Obama Takes Delegate Majority

Sen. Barack Obama crossed another threshold last night in his march toward the Democratic presidential nomination, splitting a pair of primaries with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton and claiming a majority of the pledged delegates at stake in the long nomination battle. Obama scored an easy victory in Oregon after being trounced by Clinton in Kentucky. The results left him fewer than 100 delegates short of the 2,026 currently required to win the party's nomination in one of the closest contests that Democrats have staged in a generation. Obama's claim to the most pledged delegates last night was also a not-so-subtle message to the remaining uncommitted superdelegates that if they now endorse Clinton, they will be going against the will of Democratic voters nationwide.

The New York Times, 23 May 2008

McCain Makes Health Records Public; Appears Free of Cancer

Three-time melanoma survivor John McCain appears cancer-free, has a strong heart and is in otherwise general good health, according to eight years of medical records reviewed by The Associated Press. The Republican presidential nominee-in-waiting remains at risk for developing new skin cancers, and gets a thorough check by a Mayo Clinic dermatologist every few months. McCain's most recent exams show a range of health issues common in aging: He frequently has precancerous skin lesions removed, and in February had an early stage squamous cell carcinoma, an easily cured skin cancer, removed. He had benign colon growths called polyps taken out during a routine colonoscopy in March.

The Washington Post, 24 May 2008

Clinton Sorry For Remark About RFK Assassination

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton on Friday invoked the 1968 assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy in explaining her decision to remain in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination, comments that drew criticism from aides to Sen. Barack Obama and cooled speculation that the two may form a joint ticket for the general election. Hillary Clinton's reference to the shooting of Robert Kennedy on June 6, 1968, after he had just won the California primary, hardened feelings in the Obama campaign once more, following a brief thaw as it appeared that Clinton would seek to unite the party in the final weeks of the campaign. .

The Washington Post, 25 May 2008

Obama Campaign Redoubles Efforts to Reach Hispanic Voters

Sen. Barack Obama swept across this island commonwealth Saturday, a visit that had the markings of a coda to a grueling primary campaign. Obama shouted to a crowd gathered in Old San Juan, before he led dancing supporters along the seaside battlements for a raucous *caminata*, the traditional candidate parade. The expected victory by Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (N.Y.) in next Sunday's primary here is unlikely to shift the dynamic of

the Democratic race. But Puerto Rico is emerging as a field test of what has become one of the first orders of business for the Obama campaign in its transition to general-election mode: redoubling and rethinking its effort to win over Hispanic voters, a demographic it lost to Clinton and will need against Sen. John McCain .

The Washington Post, 26 May 2008

Clinton Could Face an Uneasy Return to the Senate

When Hillary Rodham Clinton made a rare stop in the Senate last week, she spoke from a lonely outpost at the end of the Armed Services Committee dais, eight empty chairs emphasizing the gulf between her and real Senate power at the chairman's spot. It was illustrative of the inflexible senatorial math that will fix Mrs. Clinton's place in Congress should the Democratic nominating fight play out on its present course. While she has received millions of votes, stirred thousands of Americans at rallies, made hundreds of appearances and is just scores of delegates short of her goal, defeat would still return her to the Senate as No. 36 out of 49 Democrats.

The New York Times, 27 May 2008

McCain Vows to Work With Russia on Arms

Senator John McCain, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, distanced himself from the Bush administration on Tuesday by vowing to work more closely with Russia on nuclear disarmament and by calling for a reduction in tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. "Russia and the United States are no longer mortal enemies," Mr. McCain said in a speech that was interrupted at least four times by hecklers opposed to the Iraq war. "As our two countries possess the overwhelming majority of the world's nuclear weapons, we have a special responsibility to reduce their number. I believe we should reduce our nuclear forces to the lowest level we judge necessary, and we should be prepared to enter into a new arms control agreement with Russia reflecting the nuclear reductions I will seek."

The Washington Post, 28 May 2008

McCain Accepts a Hand From Bush, at Arm's Length

When President Bush ventured here for a private fundraiser with John McCain on Tuesday night, his first real campaign appearance with the presumptive GOP nominee, the event was closed to the news media and their only joint public appearance was a photo op on the airport tarmac that lasted less than a minute. The same ground rules will cover Bush's trip to Utah on Wednesday, where he will appear with former presidential candidate Mitt Romney to woo big-money Republican donors to McCain's cause. Among independent men, McCain runs ahead of the Republican Party by 20 percentage points.

The Daily Times, 28 May 2008

US should give time for peace agreement to work: Musharraf

Reiterating Pakistan's commitment to fight terrorism, President Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday asked the United States to understand ground realities in Pakistan and give time for the peace agreement made by the NWFP government to work. Talking to two US Congressional delegations led by Senator Ben Nelson and Congressman Adam Schiff at his Camp Office in Rawalpindi, the president said Pakistan considered US

Congress's support for the broadening of mutual ties very important. A Foreign Office spokesman said Musharraf also underlined Pakistan's contribution to international counter-terrorism efforts and stressed the importance of the government's strategy that covered political, military and socio-economic dimensions.

The Daily Times, 29 May 2008

"US wont' tolerate cross-border raids"

The United States opposes any agreements with tribal militants because they have sworn enmity to the US, and will not tolerate cross-border raids on its troops in Afghanistan from militants based in the Tribal Areas, Senator Russ Feingold told reporters here on Wednesday at the end of his four-day visit to Pakistan. "We are against any agreement with militants, Taliban and Al Qaeda who have sworn to harm the US," said Feingold, who is also member of the US Senate Judicial Committee. The US senator underlined the importance of Pak-US relations and said the US wanted a solid and genuine friendship with Pakistan. This relationship could be maintained and developed to new heights, he added.

The International News, 30 May 2008

Bush renews support for Musharraf

US President George W. Bush has talked to President Musharraf on phone. According to Geo News, President Bush has assured his Pakistani counterpart of his continued support. Bush expressed hope that President Musharraf would strengthen Pak - US relations. According to sources, both leaders discussed war on terror and political developments in Pakistan. In Washington, a White House spokesman said that US would continue support for Pakistan.

The Daily Times, 30 May 2008

US to withdraw 4,000 troops from Iraq

The US military announced on Thursday the withdrawal of another 4,000 'surge' troops from Iraq after reporting that violence across the country has hit a four-year low. It said the latest pullout was to be completed by next month. It is the fourth brigade to withdraw from Iraq out of five that deployed under the controversial 'surge' of American forces in February 2007. "The brigade played an integral role in establishing the conditions for long-term security in Iraq by reducing violence in the Diyala province by 70 percent," the military said in a statement. The latest withdrawal announcement came after US officials said that last week had seen the lowest level of violence across Iraq in four years, but gave no casualty figures.

The New York Times, 31 May 2008

McCain, Obama Campaigns Feud Over Iraq Troop Reductions

A fierce debate erupted today between the campaigns of Senators John McCain and Barack Obama over whether Mr. McCain misspoke in a town hall meeting on Thursday when he said American troops in Iraq have now been drawn down to 'pre-surge levels'. Mr. McCain has been hammering Mr. Obama on his national security credentials and knowledge of the facts on the ground in Iraq, arguing that he has not been to Iraq in two-and-a-half years. The Obama campaign pounced on Mr. McCain's statement, arguing

that the Republican candidate was the one who was out of touch and lacked comprehension of the situation in Iraq, by holding a conference call to review a litany of past statements on the conflict.

The Daily Times, 31 May 2008

US remains 'comfortable' with new Pakistani government in war on terror

The United States remains 'comfortable' with the new government in Pakistan in the conduct of its war on terrorism, Central Investigation Agency (CIA) chief Michael V Hayden said in an exclusive interview published in the Washington Post on Friday. The report said the Bush administration has been watching political developments in Pakistan with apprehension, worried that the country's newly elected leadership will not be as tolerant of occasional unilateral US strikes against Al Qaeda as was the government of President Pervez Musharraf, a close ally in the US fight against terrorism.